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The Nitpicker strikes again Part 1

Early 2-axle vans

by John Jesson

The freight train is the poor relation of railway modelling in too many cases. This is a pity, as the variety of wagon types and the commodities carried make the realistic operation of a freight service extremely rewarding. I would recommend that every modeller read American model railroad magazines, if only to appreciate just how much fun freight operation can be.

Having said this, I will immediately confess that I am as much at fault as many others in putting freight wagons at the bottom of the list of "things to do". Probably, most modellers concentrate on improving their locomotives, followed by passenger vehicles, with wagons last.

There is, of course, some excuse for this. Compared with the number of locomotives and passenger vehicles in a modellers roster, there are more wagons, and it becomes monotonous carrying out the same work to a number of similar vehicles. Also, it is much more difficult to find accurate drawings of freight vehicles, not to mention the multitude of differences between batches of similar wagons, making the task of modification that much harder. And how

No K2 vans remain in revenue-earning service on the SBB, but many are in evidence as departmental vehicles. These two, now stores vans, were photographed at Airolo in September 1994. 48 607 is allocated to Airolo and carries inscriptions in German, the old inscriptions have been painted out, as has the door logo. 45 637, which has had the benefit of a new coat of paint, belongs to Rodi-Fiesco and its inscriptions are in Italian.

many people take photographs of dirty old wagons ?

So, let us start to have a look at some of the common-or-garden 2-axle goods vans which the SBB have used, starting with the most elderly.

Gklm, Gklm-v (type K2)

Nearly 3,000 of these types, built between 1888 and 1916, survived to receive computer numbers, of which almost half lasted to the 1980's. Some were built with brakemans cabin, some with only an end platform and there were two styles of roof, single-arc and 3-arc.

The designations stand for:

G - covered wagon of standard type.

k - load weight less than 20 tons.

l - less than 8 ventilation openings.

m - load area less than 9 m long.

v - wired for 1000v train heat (therefore could



be marshalled between an electric locomotive and passenger train).

Two manufacturers have produced models in HO, Liliput and Lima.

Liliput used to make a Gklm with brake platform, while Lima have a Gklm-v with brakemans cabin in their range. Both are reasonable models. The Liliput vehicle is now about 30 years old and still bears comparison with that from Lima. Both have a single-arc roof. Bachmann have reintroduced the Liliput vehicle as a Gklm-v

The Lima model comes out better on overall scale accuracy, with its height the only dimension more than 1% in error. The van doors are accurate in size and bear a slogan in French on one side and German on the other. I have a suspicion that these slogans are on the wrong sides, as the sides also bear the notation banning the use of the van outside Switzerland, also in French and German. I have always thought that all markings were in a single language on each side of a vehicle, but would be happy to be proved wrong. The Swiss Express Vol.4/5 March 1995

Table 1 Comparative sizes of models and prototype

	1:1	1:87	Liliput	Lima
Length over buffers	8340	95.9	95.6	95.6
Length over headstocks	7100	81.6	82.8	81.6
Length over body (Liliput)	6820	78.4	77.7	
Length over body (Lima)	6580 *	75.6		75.7
Width	2830 *	32.5	32.0	32.3
Height	3700	42.5	43.5	43.5
Wheelbase	5000	57.5	57.4	57.2
Wheel diameter	1040	12	11.2	11.2
Buffer height	1060	12.2	12.0	13.0
	* Estimated from drawing			

bodyside ventilator covers are separate mouldings inserted from within the body. This means they are inset, whereas they should stand proud of the bodyside. The brakemans cabin is depicted as in later years, with the doors removed, but with the end wall still in place, complete with the handbrake operating handle cover. The small window above the cover is modelled, but is not glazed. Handrails and grabrails are moulded in plastic. Although a little heavy-looking, the grabrails accurately portray the rather unusual mounting. The handrails are also rather heavy and do not extend downwards far enough. This is because the footsteps do not extend out far enough, pro-

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As the distance from the tunnel exits are considerable, snacks are brought along in rucksacks, and a full meal is served at the end of the shift. A "taxi-service" brings in the new shift and collects all the workers from the old one along the way. Our "taxi" though, was another car-train which made a special stock to pick us up. It was a huge step up into the driving trailer from the lowered tunnel floor.

Thank you BLS for an interesting, well organised and safe excursion.

The most important man on the site; the head safety officer, together with his special equipment housed in one of the smaller dugouts in the tunnel wall

Early 2-axle Vans

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bably a concession to the toy market. Another concession probably accounts for the height inaccuracy, virtually all of which is accounted for by a too-large gap between the axleboxes and the bottom of the solebars, thereby accounting for the too-high buffers as well. By no means unusually for Lima, the centre of the roof is marred by a large moulding pip. All the inscriptions are very fine (some are too small) and easily legible. The van is numbered 20 85 114 4 241-9 which is correct.

The Liliput van is a little short in the body, a little narrow and a little high, although the buffer height is near enough correct. The van doors are too narrow, by about 1.5 mm. The end platform handrails and handbrake are a one-pieces nylon moulding, as was usual for Liliput, making the handrails too heavy. In contrast to the Lima van, the ventilator covers are inserted from the outside, and look far more

realistic. Inscriptions are clear and well done. The number carried is 20 85 111 6 977-2, which is also correct. The Bachmann reintroduction is better finished than the original Liliput van and carries slogans on the doors - German on one side, Italian on the other. The number is 20 85 114 4 624-6, once again, correct.

The two underframes show a remarkable similarity, considering the difference in the ages of the models. The Liliput axleboxes are the older oblong type, with a Swiss cross on each, while those on the Lima van are the more modern round type. On both vehicles, the steps below the van doors and the steps to the platform are set too far in, generally by about 2 mm, and the brake shoes are set too far out, nowhere near in line with the wheel treads.

As I said at the beginning, rebuilding freight vehicles is not something I have done to any great extent. Replacement of the plastic handrails by brass ones would improve the appearance, but the most effective change that can be made to any freight vehicle is to weather it. After all, how many clean wagons do you see, especially when the wagon is as old as these.

